

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

A GREAT WAR SHIP.

They are building a war ship in England, the 'First Rate' of the future. The keel was laid a few days ago. The new vessel is a turret ship of a novel description, and the Admiralty and her designers have high hopes in her construction. The ship is an iron-clad, without masts or sails, depends upon steam alone for propulsion, and has a new form of turret. The English regard this ship and her mate, also building, as the pioneers in a class of vessels more formidable than any afloat either in offensive or defensive power, or in coal carrying capacity. They are floating batteries mobilized. The 'Devastation' is 285 feet long, 62 1/2 wide, has a draught of 26 feet, and her burden in tons is 4406. The 'Warrior' is 380 feet long, and is of 6000 tons burden. The 'Minotaur' is 400 feet long, and is of 6021 tons. Each of these can compare in strength and solidity with the 'Devastation'. The 'Warrior' has for a plating 4 1/2 inches of hammered iron and 18 inches of teak. The 'Minotaur' has 5 1/2 inches of rolled iron, 9 inches of teak. Each has an inner skin of thin iron. The 'Devastation' will have 12 inches of rolled iron, 18 inches of teak, and 1 1/2 inch of inner skin. This is regarded as seven times as strong as the other vessels named. The 'Devastation' will have two turrets, and in each will be mounted two 30 ton guns, each carrying a 600 pound shot. Her cost will be \$290,000. The 'Warrior' cost \$360,000, and the 'Achilles' \$50,000. A crew of 250, all told, will suffice to man her. Her engines are two—800-horse power each. She is a screw-steamer, and will make 12 1/2 knots an hour. Her coal storage is 1600 tons—enough, says the London Times, to 'make the ship to proceed to the Mediterranean and return without coaling between the times of her leaving Spithead and anchoring there again at the conclusion of her voyage; or, it would enable her to cross the Atlantic, fight an action, and afterward return to a home port without having to renew her stock of fuel.'

The British naval constructor has, says the Times, 'started from the American model, and taking the benefit of the experience gained by the Americans during the war between the North and the South, he has undoubtedly added in the breastwork type of turret-ship many important features, and has given the navy a class of turret-ship that can go to sea and fight in any weather.'

There is no question that our navy is weak in aggressive vessels equal to the emergencies of modern warfare. We may have harbor defenses and floating batteries, but we have none of the imposing iron-clads that belong to the navies of other nations. All the powers of Europe have numerous war ships of the grandest types, of which our burned up Ironsides was a humble example. We have devoted ourselves to the monitor business and have left undeveloped the important field occupied by such ships as are described above. It is well to know what Great Britain is doing in naval architecture.

A PILE OF NEWSPAPERS.

Certainly there is something suggestive in the heap of "exchanges" which burdens the table at which we sit. Before we attack this formidable accumulation of newspapers we find ourselves involuntarily pursuing a train of reflection which may be thus rendered to speech. Here within a space of six feet by four is the concentrated thought which at the present moment occupies the mind of this vast country, nay, of the whole globe. Here are the views and facts, political, religious, mercantile, social, mechanical, scientific, and literary, which agitate millions of people. The telegraph and railroad placing limitations upon time and space are both here. We need not visit Richmond, Va. In these papers whatever is of interest or concern in that quarter is mirrored forth. Here is New Orleans. There is New York. That is St. Louis or Cincinnati, and thus every respectable sheet photographs Montana. Here you have in correspondence the continent of Europe, and there China is brought nearer than San Francisco. What library, however rich, so teems with provocations to thought as this pile of newspapers? The vast rows of books speak of departed things. But this heap of printed paper, with infinite variety and eloquence, speaks of the wide and multifarious present. It images the living world. It details its pleasures and its pains, its tragedies and its merry makings, its pomps and shows, its hopes and pangs, its triumphs and failures. It tells of great and small things. It records the runaway of a horse and the completion of the Suez Canal with equal impartiality. It attends at one and the same time to the most sublime and the pettiest transactions. It has the microscopic eye, and it surveys the broadest fields of observation. We say it without irreverence, that there is nothing short of Omnipotence which covers so universal a field and comprises such broad and such minute investigations as the press. It not only records, but it makes history. It not only notes, but it creates public opinion. It is at this writing not the fourth, but the first estate in the world, and it is with no slight feeling of becoming respect that we now pause in this digression to examine for the benefit of the readers of the Chronicle this imposing mass of exchanges, and contribute to extend still further whatever is in them of profit or ornament.

BOUGUERREBOURZIERISM.

Since the negro at the South has proved to be so signal a failure as a politician, as a legislator, and as a free, untrammelled cultivator of the soil the question has been sprung as to what shall be done with him. It is the question of the party which adopted him at the start as its pet and protege. In the field of politics, where he first tried his newly unfettered powers, he did not shine; as a statesman and a law-giver, to which profession he next turned his attention, he achieved little to eclipse the fame of Clay and Webster; and as a cotton planter his name will never be handed down to posterity as a thing crowned with too much of success to perish young. In short, the Freedman's Bureau has utterly failed to utilize him; and by their efforts to lift him to the plane of New England civilization, the carpet-bagger and the scalawag have succeeded only in making him two-fold more a nuisance than he otherwise would or could have been.

But we are told by the Mobile Tribune that a Boston company has been organized for the purpose of embarking extensively in the business of converting the negro from an awkward elephant into something profitable. This is to be done by the French process known as Bouguerrebouzierism. 'It is well known,

at least to the medical fraternity," says the Tribune, "that about two years ago the celebrated surgeon, De la Bouguerrebouzier, of Paris, discovered a process by which the human body may be paralyzed at will—all but the nerves of the eye, the brain, and the digestive organs. A person under the influence of Bouguerrebouzierism sees and thinks as usual, but cannot move a muscle. The great result achieved by the discovery consists in the fact that it enables the eye of science to observe the whole process of digestion by merely ripping open the abdomen of the subject, without pain to the latter. But the poor man sees and knows all the time that he is being split like a mackerel. Experience soon proved that negroes were better subjects than white men, and the consequence was that the 52d Regiment of the Corps d'Afrique, stationed near Paris, was decimated in the course of a few weeks during the spring of the present year."

The Tribune tells us further, as we have already intimated, that no sooner had certain shrewd men of Boston read an account of this new discovery than they immediately organized a joint stock company, with a capital of half a million of dollars, for the purpose of kidnapping and Bouguerrebouzierizing our fellow-citizens of African descent in all the Southern cities, and that they are now extensively engaged in the nefarious business.

In addition to all this, we are told that "the process of Bouguerrebouzierizing a negro may be accomplished in a few seconds of time, and as well when the victim is asleep as awake. He is then carried off as stiff as if he had ceased to live. Those who have witnessed the whole experiment express themselves as touched to the heart at sight of a poor negro rolling his eyes in horror at the sight of the knife ripping into his stomach."

It is to be hoped that the Freedmen's Bureau, or General Ames, or Chevalier Fornoy, or some other virtuous philanthropist who has the good of the voting machinery of the radical party at heart, has called the attention of President Grant to the operations of this gigantic corporation of Boston, and that he will call upon Congress to demand the authority under which they are carrying on business. If his attention has not been called to this thing, we beg that he will consider the call hereby made, trumpet-tongued, and that he will show the concern up to Congress in a postscript to his message.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN AGAIN.

The fact of the Danish question having been again revived, and of the consequent interchange of diplomatic notes between the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna, will probably appear to the general reader a remarkably uninteresting piece of intelligence. Of all the murky questions of European politics, the political status of these Elbe Duchies is perhaps the most unintelligible. Luxembourg and the Danubian Principalities are daylight itself when compared with the Cimmeric darkness which envelops Schleswig-Holstein. The fortunes of the industrious little community of stock farmers who sustain the commerce of Kiel and Altona have, since the seven days' German war of 1866, dropped out of public view.

It may be remembered that Prussia and Austria, to joint bailiffs for the Germanic Confederation, put in what was called a "federal execution" on this portion of the territories of the newly-crowned King of Denmark. The gallant but ineffectual resistance of the Danes, the abortive London Conference, and the joint military occupation of the Duchies, are all events not yet entirely forgotten. As a less marked episode, we may recall the Prussian recognition of the claims of Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, to the sovereignty, and Bismark's subsequent change of policy when two other candidates started up to compete for the crown. For nine months eleven Prussian Crown lawyers tried hard to unravel the skein, and, tangled by the narrow majority of six to five, came to the highly judicious conclusion that none of the pretenders had a right to the whole of the Duchies, and that therefore Prussia and Austria, to whom the King of Denmark had ceded the territory, were the legitimate owners.

These learned pundits were evidently incapable of realizing the absurdity of deriving a title from the very sovereign whose claims the German powers had just been forcibly disputing. The question, however, remained conveniently open, and formed a pretext, from the dispute incident on a joint occupation, first for sundry threatening despatches to Austria, and next, by its introduction into the German Diet, for the declaration of the war which culminated at Sadowa, and changed the territorial map of Europe.

To those who coincide with the opinion lately expressed by a well-informed commentator on European politics, that "we had as yet seen only the first act of a great drama when the curtain fell at Sadowa," the reopening of the Schleswig-Holstein dispute is somewhat ominous. It is probable that Austria may have at last demanded that her former coadjutor should challenge the general vote of the inhabitants of their future sovereignty—a course which, so long as she clung to Venetia and the Quadrilateral, she could not very consistently press.

A RADICAL TRIUMPH IN MISSISSIPPI.

The brother-in-law dodge is played out. The inimitable Dent is politically defunct. There was not virtue enough in the hem of the President's garment to give political life to a relative himself without principle or merit. Men of all parties will rejoice that this effort of one of the smallest of small politicians to climb into conspicuous position over a great man's shoulders has signally failed. That every tub should stand on its own bottom is a principle which appears to be recognized still by the common sense of mankind.

The ex-Kebels have often boasted of their power over the colored people of the South, and of their ability to make them vote as their old masters should dictate. If the ex-slaveholder had been free to use the whip and the knife as freely as he was in the days of James Buchanan the old supremacy would have been maintained, just as it used to be over the poor, handless whites of that region. But, happily, General Ames was on hand to see justice done, and to maintain every man's right, be he black or white, to vote as he pleased. They have so voted, and the result is one favorable to freedom and the future peace of the whole country.

The victory of the radicals in Mississippi secures a Republican delegation in Congress, and the adoption of a State Constitution, and

the ratification of the fifteenth amendment by the Republican Legislature just chosen. Two Republican Senators will be chosen; and the home of the chief of the Rebellion will now complete gloriously the work of reconstruction and bring up the topstone of the free Union with shouts of rejoicing. The Dent papers are loud in their complaints against General Ames. He has done his duty under the law, and no more. It was the intention of Congress that the whole people, black and white, in the State, should settle the conditions on which the new era of self-government should begin. The old slaveholding regime had brought the State, rich as it was and in soil and resources, to bankruptcy, and established the reign of anarchy and bloodshed in all her borders. Now she will have a government which will gain its just powers from the consent of all classes governed. Liberty and justice will be no longer the privilege of a select class, but the inheritance of all.

This contest could have been ended years ago but for the tergiversations of Andrew Johnson.

In the spring of 1868, through his influence, the blacks were left without protection, and the State rejected the constitution they have now adopted by over seven thousand votes. The poor blacks then had to struggle for the radical cause unaided and alone. They made the best fight of their power, and cast 63,291 votes for ratification and the radical ticket, against 63,860 votes cast by the copper-rebels. This time General Grant was on their side, and showed fair play between the parties. Some blacks were still bullied or bought into supporting the conservative ticket, but a considerable sprinkling of whites, led by Alcorn, voted the radical ticket. The vote polled is the heaviest ever cast in the State, and the result insures the ascendancy of the Republican party in the State for a long time to come. This victory we deem of great importance, as its effects will be felt for good in all the future history of our country.

THE MESSAGE AND REPORTS.

OPINIONS OF THE NEW YORK PRESS.

The Tribune says of the Message:—"On the whole, while we may not fully concur in its every recommendation, we regard this as one of the wisest and most judicious messages ever transmitted to Congress, and confidently predict for it the hearty approval and concurrence of the American people."

The same paper says of the Treasury Report:—"Mr. Boutwell has to tell us what he has done, and the record is such as to insure praise. He has to tell us what he proposes; and here he encounters rival interests, varying opinions, the theories of bankers, and the selfish wishes of speculators. * * * We take thankfully the good we get, and need only now add that the Secretary has given us a most valuable, careful, able, and, in the main, sound report."

Of the Naval Report it says:—"Secretary Robeson's business in coming suddenly into command of one of the Departments of Government was to put a navy in repair. * * * He appears on the whole to have done well, and in calling for an appropriation of \$28,000,000 for the coming year, or an advance of \$8,000,000 on former estimates, gives some apparently strong reasons for the increased estimates."

Of the Postal Report it says:—"The annual report of Mr. Postmaster-General Creswell is concise and clear in its statements, and statesmanlike in its recommendations. * * * It is refreshing to find a man at the head of the Post Office Department who bravely grapples with that stupendously expensive humbug, the franking privilege. Mr. Creswell recommends the total extirpation of the time-honored evil, and gives most cogent reasons therefor."

Of Secretary Cox's report the Tribune says:—"The report of the Secretary of the Interior is worthy of the most careful study. It is so replete with encouraging statistics, and so forcibly does it illustrate the fact that a new era of honesty and economy was inaugurated when the present administration came into power, that aside from its recommendations for still more efficient service and a further reduction of expenses, it will be read with interest."

It remarks upon the War report as follows:—"The present head of the War Department, though a man of perhaps greater energy and practical sagacity than his countrymen will at once recognize, cannot have been long enough in office to have impressed upon it an administrative character peculiarly his own. What General Belknap reports, it may do him credit to say General Rawlins might have in many respects reported."

The Times says of the message:—"A sense of gratitude and pride may well be awakened in any nation which is invited to contemplate so bright and hopeful a review of its affairs as that which President Grant is providentially enabled to lay before us. His message is one of good news throughout. The President has not attempted to adorn his message with any rhetorical artifices. He gives a comprehensive and business-like summary of the information which the great body of citizens desire to possess. He omits nothing of importance and introduces nothing which is superfluous."

It expresses this opinion of Mr. Boutwell's exhibit:—"Much of the report is devoted to the business details of the department, its complex machinery, and the proper directions and reform as well as economy and security of management, in all which Mr. Boutwell evinces an aptness and industry for administration only equalled by his ability to shape the more important concerns of the public finances."

Speaking of the naval report the Times says:—"It is to be regretted that he did not incorporate directly into it, and so bring before the country as well as before Congress, the report of Mr. Borie's board for the inspection of steam machinery. That report shows in specific facts and figures the enormous blunders of the Steam Bureau in its constructional feats, which have crippled the naval service and burdened it with extravagant expenditures."

Of the Post Office report it says:—"The Postmaster-General's report presents a mass of statistics, many of which are important and all interesting. * * * The whole report bears testimony to the intelligence, zeal, and activity with which the affairs of the department have been conducted."

Of Secretary Cox's report we have the following criticism:—"The report of Secretary Cox proves to be

a digest or synopsis, in the main, of the sub-reports of departments and districts, drawn up, as far as practicable, in the spirit, if not the language, of subordinates. However, the reports from the five district commanders, from the Freedmen's Bureau, and from the other customary sources, are both interesting and valuable."

Herald.

"To sum up, on our financial affairs the policy recommended in the message is good and sound; on reconstruction it is consistent with the policy of a uniform application of the laws; on our foreign relations it is carefully conservative, perhaps a little too much so on the Cuban question. But from first to last there is nothing in the message, excepting the Tenure-of-Office law, calculated to disturb the harmony promised between the President and Congress, unless there may be some trouble created in the Senate touching the division of the spoils. In a word, it is a good business message, and indicates a good administration and peace and prosperity to the country under President Grant, without panics and with a steady reduction of the debt and a quiet return to specie payments."

Of the Treasury report it says:—"Secretary Boutwell, in his communication to Congress, takes pride in the large reduction of the national debt, the details of which have been already given to the public in the debt statement of the 1st inst. The feature of the document is the testimony it bears to the fidelity with which General Grant in assuming the administration of the Government has carried out his promises in the matter of the revenue and expenditures of the nation."

World.

Contrary to the general expectation, the World doesn't like the message. It says:—"President Grant makes it too evident that the preparation of public documents is an employment in which he is not at home. His manner of writing is feeble and limping, and the substance and tissue of his ideas give an appearance of repeating with imperfect apprehension views borrowed from others, rather than the digested results of independent reflection. His long introduction detains attention without rewarding it, as the statistical statements and historical recital of which it consists convey no information. There is nothing in this part of the message which every member of Congress and every reader of the document does not know as well as the President. When we find an ill-arranged structure, made up, for the most part, of materials selected or abridged from the reports of the heads of the departments, * * * in point of ability, this is the weakest message ever sent to Congress by an American President."

In remarking on the Treasury report the World says:—"Undoubtedly, the most important preliminary to financial stability, is to get the bulk of our debt into the hands of permanent investors. Mr. Boutwell is of opinion that this cannot be done without a previous conversion of the five-twenties into new bonds. He opposes any reduction of taxes at this session of Congress, thinking that an excess of revenue is necessary for convincing the present bondholders of the ability of the Government to pay them off, and thereby produce a willingness to exchange the five-twenties for other securities. This is weak and self-refuting."

The Sun says of the message:—"President Grant's first annual message has not the merit of brevity. * * * On the question of currency the President's views are sound and statesmanlike. * * * In regard to Cuba, General Grant says:—"It has been the endeavor of the administration to execute the neutrality laws in good faith, no matter how unpleasant the task, made so by the suffering we have endured from lack of like good faith towards us by other nations. * * * This is the weakest and most objectionable part of the message. These expressions of barren sympathy for the struggling Cubans are of little value in the face of the fact that the administration has done all in its power to check the effective expression of the national sympathies of the people, and to prevent the Cubans from receiving that material aid which would have amply sufficed long ago to have settled the matter satisfactorily."

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